THE Shadow STRIKES!
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"GHOSTS"
by Jones & Barreto
EDUARDO BARRETO

FOCUS

With all the attention given Superman and Batman over the last few years, many people have expressed their frustration over not being able to obtain copies of the earliest issues of SUPERMAN, ACTION COMICS, DETECTIVE COMICS, or BATMAN because of the limited copies available and exorbitant price. It became obvious that the demand was growing and had to be met in one way or another.

Coming the week of October 24 is the answer: THE SUPERMAN ARCHIVES, Volume One. This hardcover edition will contain the first four issues of SUPERMAN, by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, complete with covers and ads. Assembled by Richard Bruning and Mark Waid, the 272-page volume marks the beginning of a preservation program as well as making DC's earliest heroes available to the general public.

Originally, SUPERMAN reprinted the lead feature stories from ACTION COMICS; it wasn't until much later that the title began running entire issues of original stories. With that in mind, Mark said it made more sense to start the ARCHIVES with SUPERMAN. "The first six issues worth of ACTION stories are in SUPERMAN #1 through 4, so the fans will not miss a thing," he says.

Since many of those stories had never been reprinted before, there was a great deal of debate on how to represent the stories. "The answer was provided, virtually from left field," Mark explains. "Artist Greg Theakston had developed a process that would chemically bleach the color from comic book pages, allowing us to have the black line artwork to work with." A Batman story was "Theakstonized" for last year's GREATEST JOKER STORIES book.

Unfortunately, the process destroys the actual comic book; however, it allows the work to be reprinted, opening up DC's Golden Age material for inspection. After working on the first volume of the ARCHIVES, Greg turned his attention to stories for inclusion in this year's GREATEST GOLDEN AGE STORIES EVER TOLD. Nearly half of that volume will present stories never previously reprinted.

DCs library contains two bound volumes of SUPERMAN'S first year and they are showing their age, with pages crumbling into dust every time we open a volume. That

didn't stop the pain when we had to razor out the first four issues, page by page," Mark adds. "Greg took the pages and, working on them with some friends, "Theakstonized the entire four issues in under a month."

From there, the pages were photostated to original art size, nearly twice the printed size. Mark and Richard went over the pages and marked spots where the Production Department was going to have to make minor touch-ups and art corrections. When done, the pages were ready for reproduction.

It was decided early in the project that to properly preserve the feeling of the era, the books would be colored as they were in the early 1940s. This meant using the limited range of colors that changed only recently in the comics business. Colorists at DC's color computer operation were lent the remaining volume of early SUPERMAN comics and they used those pages as guides.

Mark points out that in some cases, coloring mistakes crept into the finished books; they have been corrected for this volume. "Things like having a red airplane in a red sky next to another red panel—those types of problems have been altered," he says.

One of the things to surprise Mark and Richard was that as early as 1940, comics were employing airbrush effects and surprints, things most people assumed were perfected and used regularly only since the late 1970s. "We're recreating the surprints and airbrush tones and I want people to realize that we didn't add these to jazz up the pages. This was a fascinating thing to discover," Mark adds.

Richard turned to designer Alex Jay to come up with an attention-grabbing format, which will use imagery from the early comics, instead of bringing in another artist. Joe Shuster's dynamic Man of Steel will be surrounded by a mixture of modern and retro design elements, bringing people the best of both eras.

In a similar vein the volume will feature an introduction by famed comics artist and historian Jim Steranko. "Steranko, if anyone, knows more about that era of the comics industry, first as a fan and second as writer of *The History of Comics*," Mark notes. "He was an ideal choice for the introduction since he can put the work into perspective and explain his appreciation of the material."

Production Director Bob Rozakis added his two cents to the volume by selecting a heavy off-white paper stock for the reprint and using the Smythe sewn binding process. Better than perfect binding, the various sections of the book will be sewn into the binding, giving the book greater durability for multiple readings.

After this volume is finished, Mark and Richard have set their sights on the future, for 1990 plans call for another SUPERMAN volume and the first BATMAN volume, creating a mass market library of DC's greatest characters at the very beginnings of their illustrious careers.

—Robert Greenberger

DC LIST

THIS WEEK

WILD DOG SPECIAL 1
The mob declares war on Wild Dog. The government hounds him into clandestine service. His secret identity is exposed. And The Catcher is on his trail. ●

THE SHADOW STRIKES! 3
The evil monk's plan begins to unravel as The Shadow moves closer to the heart of the mystery—a mystery that began decades earlier. ■►

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 12
The web of treachery woven by Xanathar and Khelben unravels . . . and minds are flayed. ■►

DR. FATE 12
Two Doctor Fates manage to get the upper hand with Darkseid—but at what cost? ■►

NEW GODS 10
It's war between New Genesis and Apokolips. Which side will Orion, son of Darkseid, choose? ■►

THE PHANTOM 9
The Phantom confronts slavery in modern Africa, as he attempts to liberate a group of prisoners from an armed plantation. ■►

SPECTRE 31
The Spectre is possessed by Raka, Betty Bumphus's personal demon, in this final issue. ■►

GREEN ARROW 26
GA travels further into the real Sherwood Forest. He locates the mysterious woman he has been searching for . . . and he uncovers the secret of her grandfather's death. ■►▲

CAPTAIN ATOM 35
Captain Atom finally learns the secret of the silver shield . . . and the truths that Megala has been hiding. ●

JUSTICE LEAGUE EUROPE 8
The vampire hordes march on Simon Stagg's factory. Simon has a solution but it's a very final one. Plus—Dr. Fate versus the Gray Man. ●

SUICIDE SQUAD 35
The rescue team has arrived on Apokolips but the damage has already been done and now it's time to mop up. Featuring the long-awaited return of Deadshot! ●

LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT 1
The Shaman of Gotham by Denny O'Neil, Ed Hannigan, and John Beatty kicks off our first all-new Batman title in years! ◆►

ACTION COMICS 647
The ultimate transformation of the new Brainiac begins . . . with big headaches in store for the Man of Steel! ●

LEGEND

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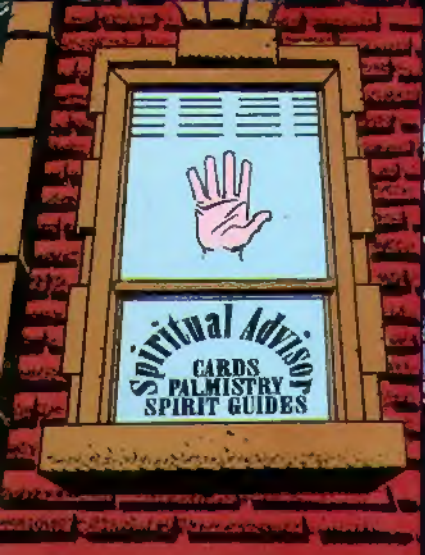

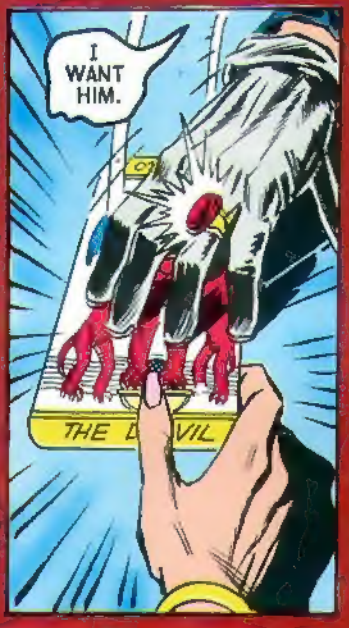

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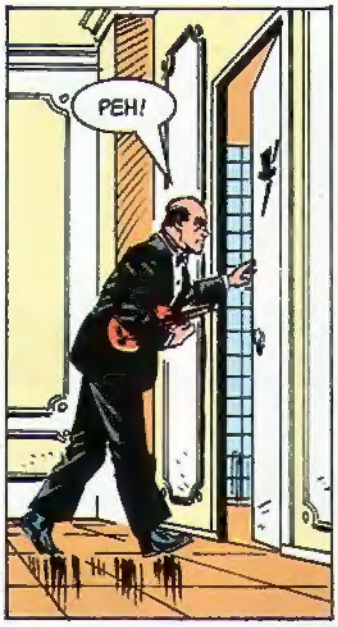
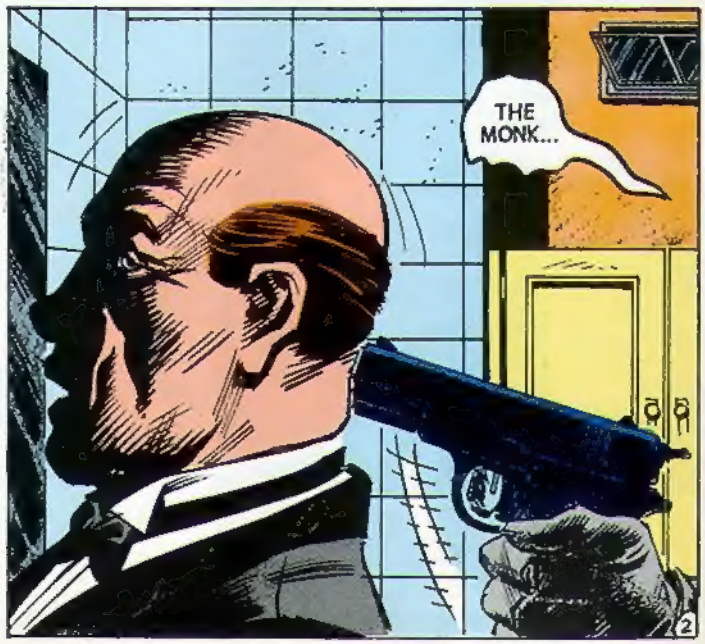
Cafe
Odessa

LOVELY, LOVELY!
DO YOU KNOW "LOVE IN BLOOM"?

GOT YOUR PAY IN THE KITCHEN.
LOVE IN BLOOM, LATE CROWDS.

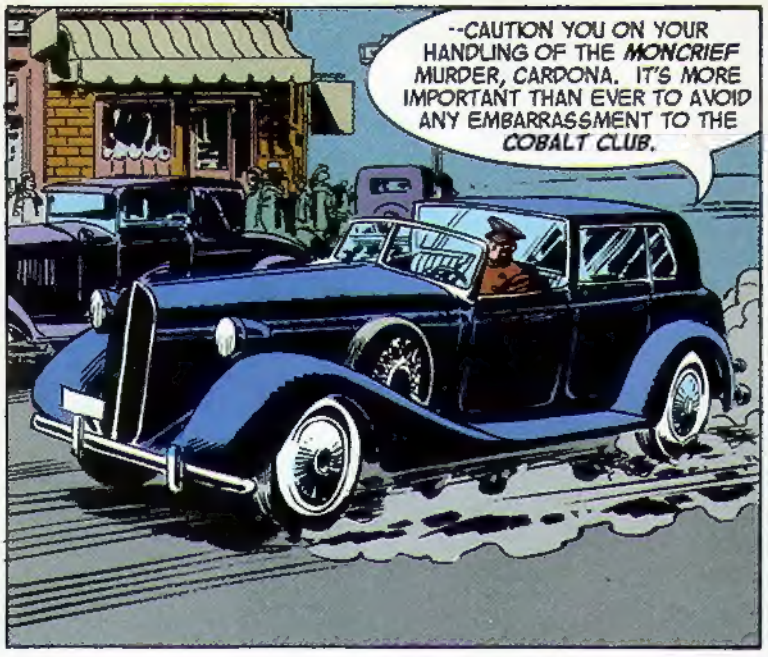

PEH!


THE MONK...

TINSMITH
TINK
SALE OR REPAIR?
KNOWLEDGE.
WHERE IS RASPUTIN?
I--I CAN USE THIS--
I AM HAPPY FOR YOU.
I CAN USE THESE.
RASPUTIN.
WE WASH OUR HANDS OF HIM. HE KILLS PEOPLE. IF YOU WANT HIM, WE'RE GRATEFUL.
BUT WHAT CAN I TELL YOU-- A POOR JUNKMAN--
SEND WORD TO HIM. HE IS HUNTED.
BY WHO?
3

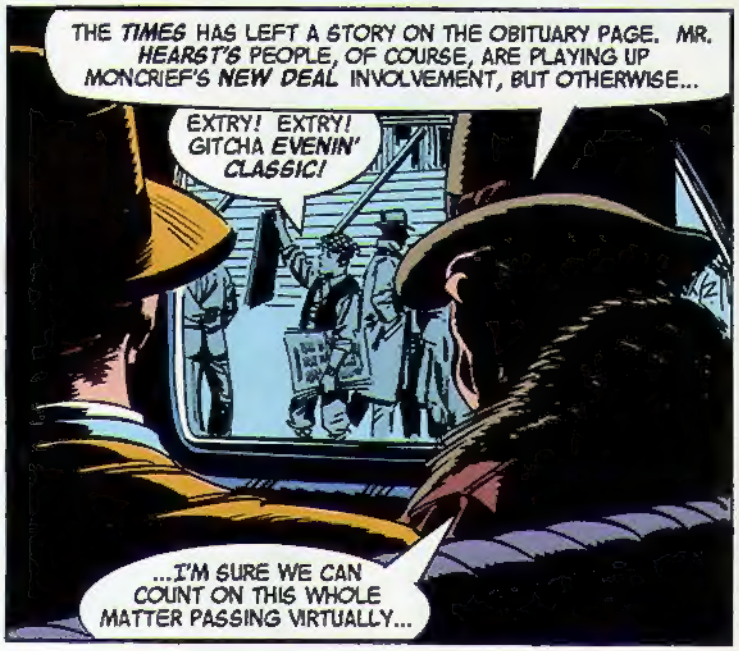
GHOSTS

GERARD JONES	EDUARDO BARRETO	DAVID CODY WEISS	ANTHONY TOLLIN	BRIAN AUGUSTYN
WRITER	ARTIST	LETTERER	COLORIST	EDITOR


--CAUTION YOU ON YOUR HANDLING OF THE MONCRIEF MURDER, CARDONA. IT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER TO AVOID ANY EMBARRASSMENT TO THE COBALT CLUB.

YOU KNOW ME, COMMISSIONER. IT'D BREAK MY HEART TO TROUBLE ANY OF YOUR SOCIETY FRIENDS.
I RESENT THE SARCASM, INSPECTOR. JUST BECAUSE ONE OF YOUR PEOPLE IS IN THE MAYOR'S OFFICE NOW, YOU--

WELL. IT WILL ALL RIGHT ITSELF IN TIME.
I'VE BEEN INVITED TO A PARTY AT THE HOME OF LAMONT CRANSTON, A HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL COBALTER. MY FRIENDS IN THE PRESS HAVE BEEN VERY COOPERATIVE...

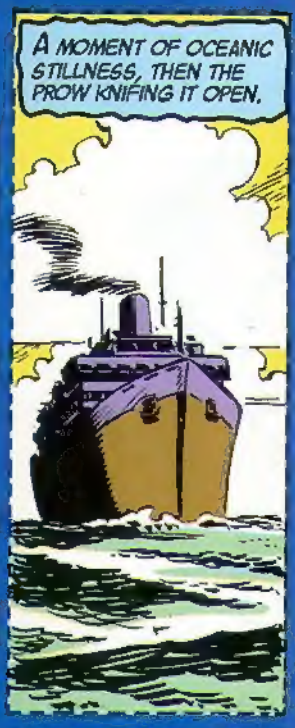

THE TIMES HAS LEFT A STORY ON THE OBITUARY PAGE. MR. HEARST'S PEOPLE, OF COURSE, ARE PLAYING UP MONCRIEF'S NEW DEAL INVOLVEMENT, BUT OTHERWISE...
EXTRY! EXTRY! GITCHA EVENIN' CLASSIC!
...I'M SURE WE CAN COUNT ON THIS WHOLE MATTER PASSING VIRTUALLY...

Classic
XTRA
HEADLESS HORROR FOUND IN MILLIONAIRE'S SANCTUM!

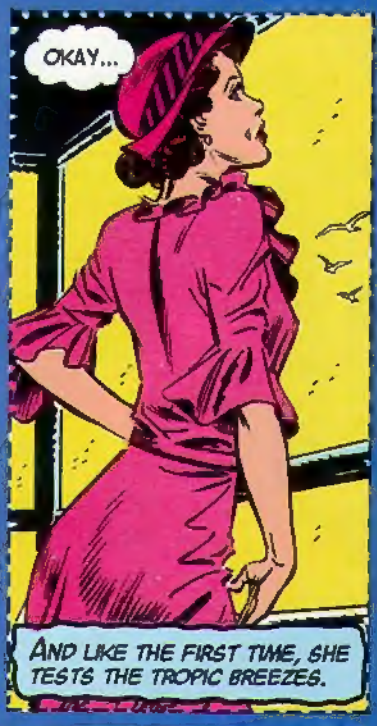
WELL...
NO ONE OF CONSEQUENCE READS THOSE TABLOIDS ANYWAY.

INSPECTOR!
WE'VE GOT ANOTHER DECAPITATION MURDER. SOME RICH BIRD NAMED JOHN NICHOLS.
OKAY, MARKHAM. NAB ME A CAR AND A STENOGRAPHER--
OH LORD, OH LORD--ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE CLUB.
--GET THE COMMISSIONER A DRINK.
AND ONE MORE THING--
GIVE THIS TO NIBSY--THE NEWSBOY OUT THERE--AND TELL HIM TO TURN UP THE VOLUME.
BUNNY? LAMONT CRANSTON HERE. WANTED TO MAKE SURE MY SOCIAL SECRETARY HAD--
GOOD, GOOD. YOU'LL BE HERE, THEN?
IT'LL BE A LIVELY MIX--THE FELLOWS FROM THE RUSSIAN CONSULATE, MOST OF THE COBALT CLUB, EVEN A CAR MANUFACTURER.
LISTEN, BUNNY. YOU BROUGHT A LADY TO THAT SOVIET-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP DINNER. CALLED HERSELF KARAGINA. CAN YOU REACH HER AGAIN?
WELL, DO TRY. I'D LIKE VERY MUCH TO MAKE HER ACQUAINTANCE.
NO, NO. JUST TELL HER...
... I'M AN OLD FRIEND OF HER FATHER'S.
WESTON
VASILEVICH
ZHERKOV
ORT
WILSON
HA HA HA
6

IT IS ALWAYS TO THE SEA THAT SHE RETURNS.


A MOMENT OF OCEANIC STILLNESS, THEN THE PROW KNIFING IT OPEN.

SHE IS ON THE DECK AGAIN, SEEING THE MAN IN WHITE FOR THE FIRST TIME AGAIN.
OOO. LOOKS LIKE THE GENUINE ARTICLE.


OKAY...
AND LIKE THE FIRST TIME, SHE TESTS THE TROPIC BREEZES.

--LET'S SEE IF YOU'RE AS MAGICAL AS THE LOVE-SONGS SAY.

OH, I'M SO SORRY! HOW DID THAT EVER GET LOOSE? YOU WERE AWFULLY SWEET TO CATCH IT FOR ME!
I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE.
NO, REALLY, I'M TERRIBLY GRATEFUL, MR...

CRANSTON. LAMONT CRANSTON.
THE LAMONT CRANSTON?
THAT IS...I KNOW OF YOU, OF COURSE...THROUGH SOCIETY. YOU KNOW HOW WE SOCIETY GIRLS DO LIKE TO GOSSIP.
DO YOU CRUISE THE CARIBBEAN OFTEN, MR. CRANSTON?
I'M ONLY HERE ON BUSINESS.
I HOLIDAY HERE AT EVERY CHANCE. THE WILD SWELL OF THE SEA, THE SULTRY TROPIC MOON, THE PLAINTIVE PIPING OF THE MARIMBA THROUGH THE PALMS--
THEN I'LL LEAVE YOU TO YOUR PIPING MARIMBAS, MISS LANE. I HAVE SOMETHING THAT MUST BE DONE.
WELL, JUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO FALL IN.
YOU MIGHT FREEZE THE OTHER FISH.
LIKE THE FIRST TIME, THE WORDS STOP HIM.
LIKE THE FIRST TIME, HE TURNS.
BUT IT'S NEVER AGAIN LIKE THE FIRST TIME.
AAAAAAAAA

SAME DREAM?
UH-HUH.
POOR KID. YOU SHOULDN'T BE MIXED UP IN THIS. YOU OUGHTA JUST TELL THE BOSS--

YOU STAY.
I OWE HIM. BUT YOU--WHY?

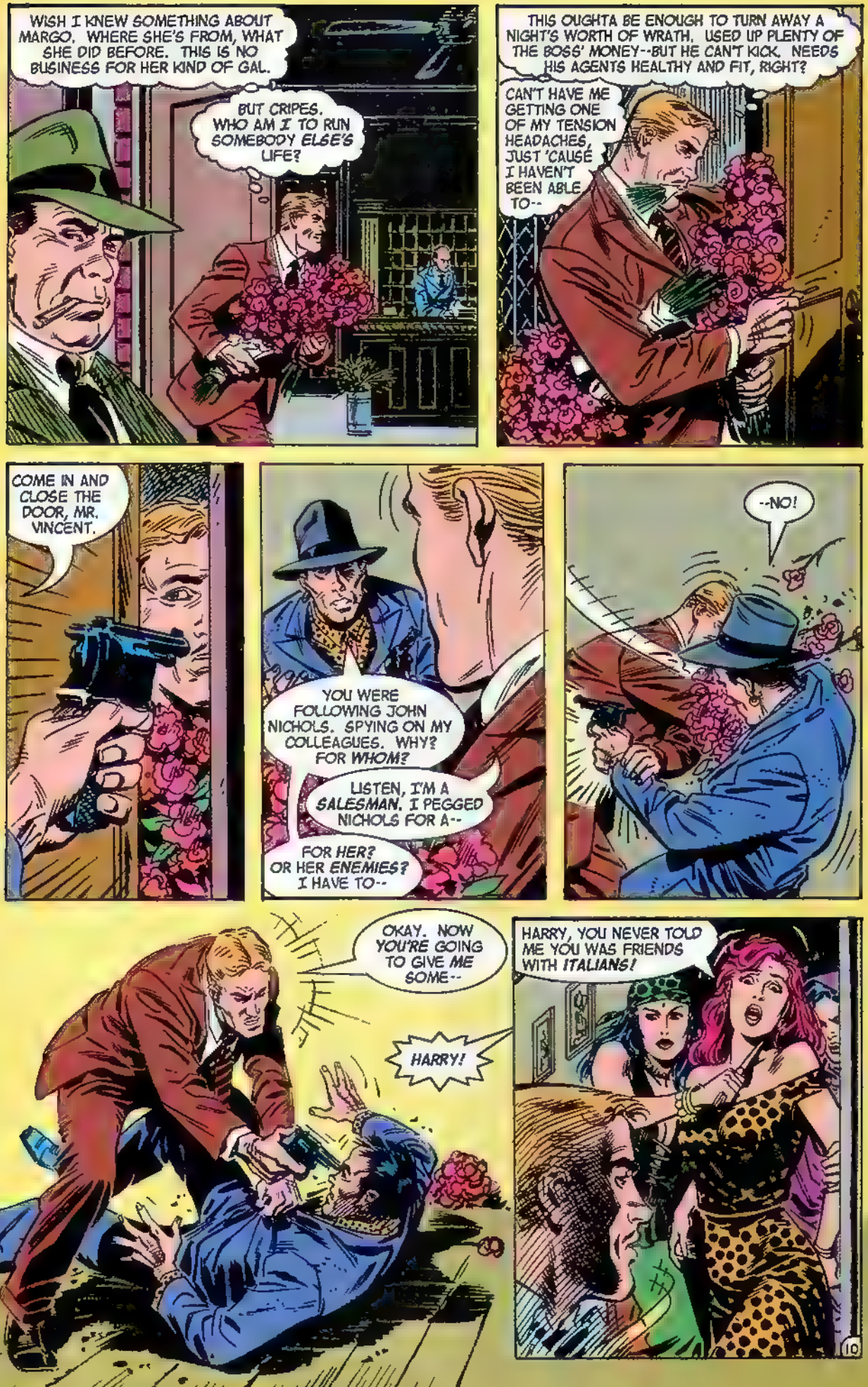
DON'T MAKE ME *ARGUE*, HARRY, NOT AFTER WHAT I'VE...
SORRY, KID. BUT YOU CAN'T BE *SURE* IT HAPPENED. YOU DON'T REMEMBER.
I DON'T WANT TO. GOD, I DON'T.

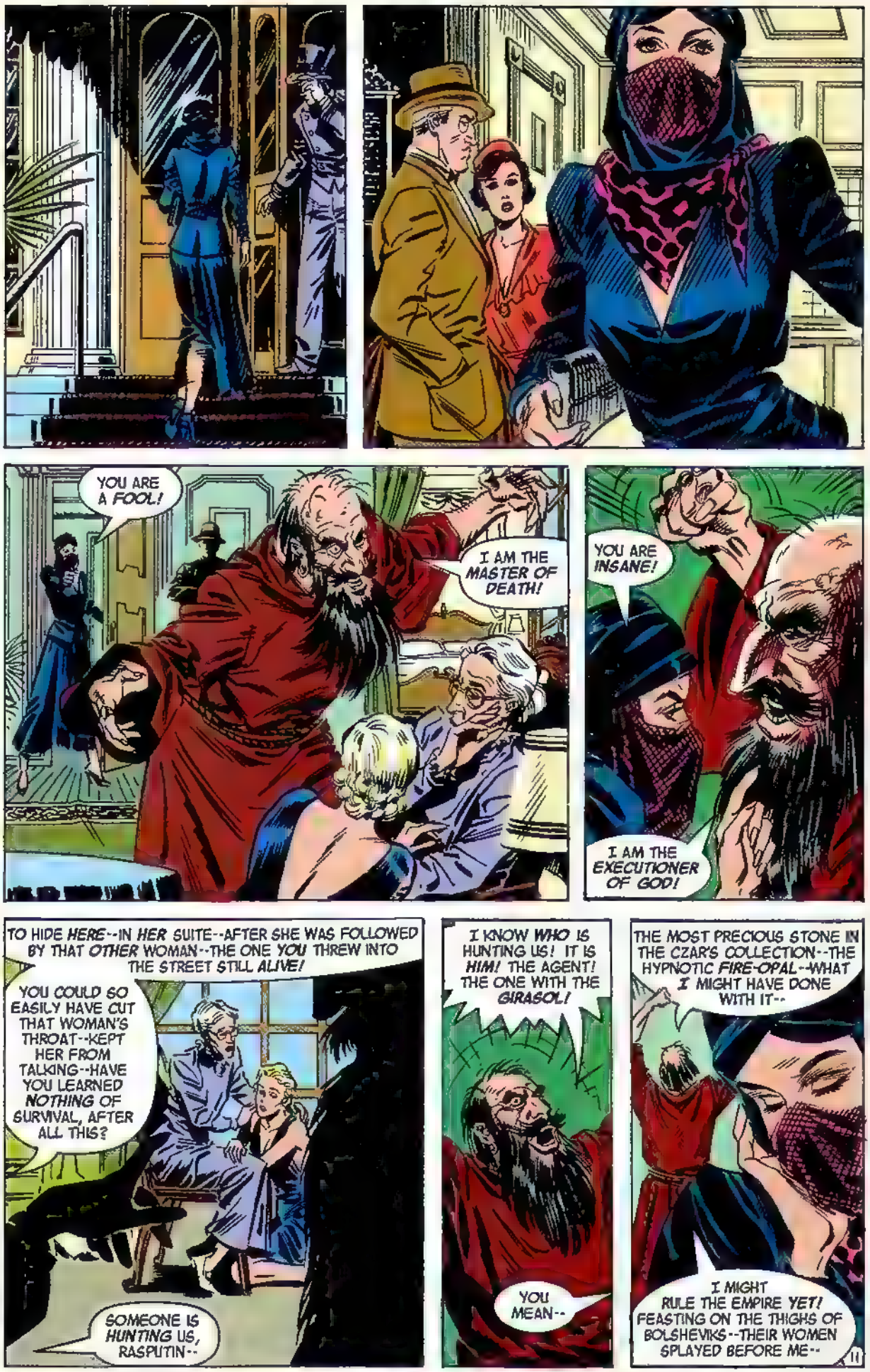
RIGHT. YOU GONNA BE AWAKE A WHILE? THE BOSS GOT YOU A DOCTOR, COMING UP SOON.
THAT WAS NICE.

MAYBE. HE WANTS YOU HEALTHY, FOR A PARTY HE'S THROWING.
WHY A PARTY?
YOU THINK HE'D EXPLAIN? PART OF THE PLAN, THAT'S ALL. BUT DON'T BE SURPRISED IF YOU MEET THE DAUGHTER OF THE *CZAR* THERE.

ME, I'VE GOT MY OWN LITTLE QUEEN-FOR-A-NIGHT WAITING AT MY HOTEL. AND *NOON* IS AROUND THE TIME SHE STARTS TO STIR, SO--
NOON? HARRY--YOU SAT WITH ME ALL NIGHT--AND ALL MORNING?
DON'T THANK ME--

IT JUST GAVE ME A CHANCE TO STEAL THE SILVERWARE.
DON'T DO ANYTHING *I'D* DO, KIDDO.


WISH I KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT MARGO. WHERE SHE'S FROM, WHAT SHE DID BEFORE. THIS IS NO BUSINESS FOR HER KIND OF GAL.
BUT CRIPES. WHO AM I TO RUN SOMEBODY ELSE'S LIFE?
THIS OUGHTA BE ENOUGH TO TURN AWAY A NIGHT'S WORTH OF WRATH. USED UP PLENTY OF THE BOSS' MONEY--BUT HE CAN'T KICK. NEEDS HIS AGENTS HEALTHY AND FIT, RIGHT?
CAN'T HAVE ME GETTING ONE OF MY TENSION HEADACHES, JUST 'CAUSE I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO--
COME IN AND CLOSE THE DOOR, MR. VINCENT.
YOU WERE FOLLOWING JOHN NICHOLS. SPYING ON MY COLLEAGUES. WHY? FOR WHOM?
LISTEN, I'M A SALESMAN. I PEGGED NICHOLS FOR A--
FOR HER? OR HER ENEMIES? I HAVE TO--
--NO!
OKAY. NOW YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE ME SOME--
HARRY!
HARRY, YOU NEVER TOLD ME YOU WAS FRIENDS WITH ITALIANS!
10


YOU ARE A FOOL!
I AM THE MASTER OF DEATH!
YOU ARE INSANE!
I AM THE EXECUTIONER OF GOD!
TO HIDE HERE--IN HER SUITE--AFTER SHE WAS FOLLOWED BY THAT OTHER WOMAN--THE ONE YOU THREW INTO THE STREET STILL ALIVE!
YOU COULD SO EASILY HAVE CUT THAT WOMAN'S THROAT--KEPT HER FROM TALKING--HAVE YOU LEARNED NOTHING OF SURVIVAL, AFTER ALL THIS?
SOMEONE IS HUNTING US, RASPUTIN--
I KNOW WHO IS HUNTING US! IT IS HIM! THE AGENT! THE ONE WITH THE GIRASOL!
YOU MEAN--
THE MOST PRECIOUS STONE IN THE CZAR'S COLLECTION--THE HYPNOTIC FIRE-OPAL--WHAT I MIGHT HAVE DONE WITH IT--
I MIGHT RULE THE EMPIRE YET! FEASTING ON THE THIGHS OF BOLSHEVIKS--THEIR WOMEN SPLAYED BEFORE ME--
11

BUT HE TOOK IT! NOT EVEN A RUSSIAN! HE DISCOVERED MY SECRETS--PLOTTED AGAINST ME--
LEFT ME WITH JOKES ON MY FINGERS. DIAMONDS, RUBIES--
CAN IT BE TRUE, THEN?
WHAT ARE THEY SPEAKING? WHO IS SHE?
SHE'S MADAME ZARA, MY...MY SPIRITUALIST...
OH, AUNTIE, I'M SO SORRY! BUT ALL THE GIRLS WERE DOING IT... SHE SAID BROTHER GREGOR WAS A GREAT MYSTIC, BUT HE... THERE WERE DRUGS AND...AND...
THE POWER OF SPIRIT! THE SUPREME BEING HAS INCARNATED A PIECE OF HIMSELF IN ME-- YOU SEE IT IN MY EYES, DON'T YOU? YOU HEAR IT IN MY VOICE. CONTROLLING YOU, BENDING YOU--YES?
HE STOLE THAT FROM ME!
STAY HERE! I HAVE NEED OF YOU!
NO! I WILL HUNT HIM DOWN! I WILL HAVE MY RING!
YOU'D GO OUT, THEN--
--WITHOUT YOUR ELIXIR?
LOOK AT YOU. ALREADY THE COLOR DRAINS FROM YOUR FACE. YOUR SKIN LOOKS WAXY.
IT--IT DOES?
YOUR HANDS--ARE THEY NOT TIGHTENING? DO YOU NOT FEEL THE BONES LOCK EVEN NOW?
YES--YES I DO.
AND YOUR LEGS. THEY WEAKEN. THEY SHIVER WITH THE COMING OF--
THE ELIXIR... PLEASE...
12

WHO IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN MIX YOUR ELIXIR PROPERLY, RASPUTIN?
YOU.
AND WHO DO YOU SERVE?

YOU. ONLY YOU.

YES.

YES!

DEATH RETREATS AGAIN!

BRING ME THE WOMAN!

RING RING
CARDONA
CARDONA. WHAT?
YOU'RE TUGGING MY GAM, MARKHAM-- THE SAME NICHOLS? MAKING DEATH-THREATS AGAINST WILLIAM ORT?
WANTED
NO, I'M NOT CALLING ANYBODY A LIAR.
JUST DON'T KNOW HOW TO MAKE SENSE OF IT, YET.
ZO, INZPECTOR. VAT YOU TINK OF ALL DESE MILLIONAIRES MIT DEIR HEADS GET CUT OFF, EH?
DUNNO, FRITZY. SCREWY STUFF. TURNS OUT THERE'VE BEEN OTHER KNOCK-OFFS LIKE THIS. COUPLE GUYS IN RUSSIA IN THE 20'S. THEN GYPSIES IN POLAND, RUSSIAN ÉMIGRÉS IN BERLIN
AND A SOVIET EMBASSY AIDE IN PARIS JUST LAST YEAR. LEAVING A TRAIL LIKE HANSEL AND GRETEL--ONLY NOT BREADCRUMBS.
VEL, I'M CHUST GLAD I'M A CHANITOR ONLY, JA?
NOT AN ENEMY IN THE WORLD, HUH? THAT'S THE TICKET, FRITZY.
14

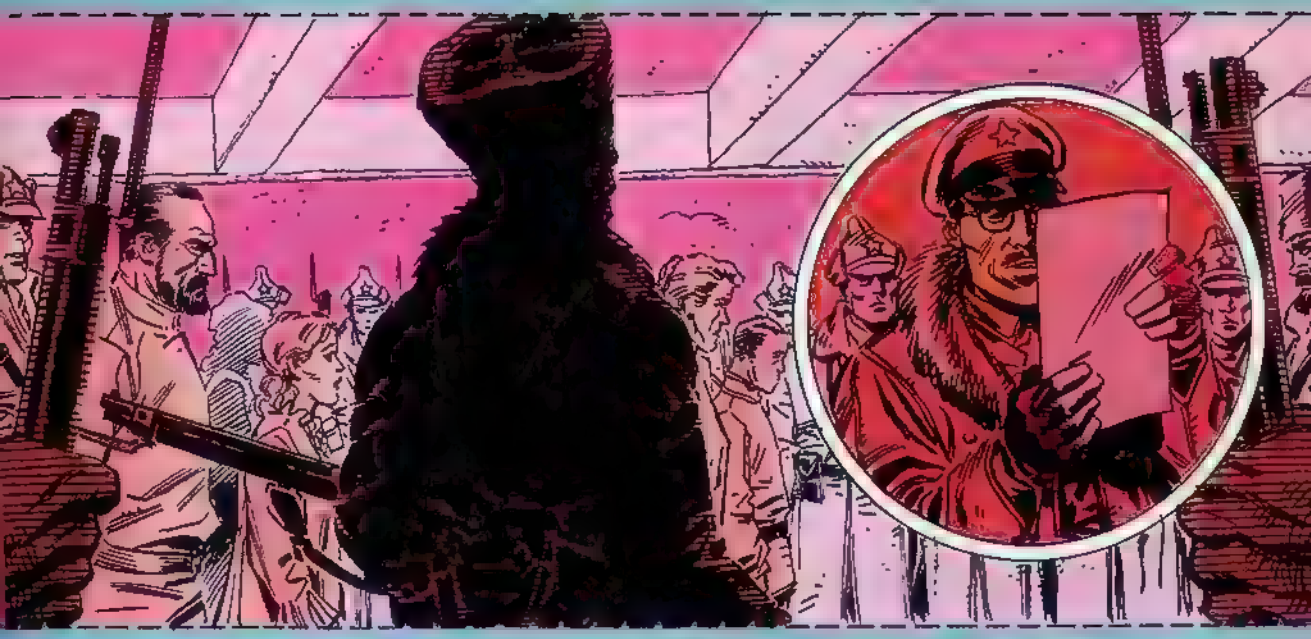
I'M KEEPING THE RUSSIANS WELL-OILED--WITH VODKA AND BATTED EYELASHES.
I NOTICE YOU AREN'T MINGLING.
I NEED AN OVERVIEW.
I TAKE IT SHE DIDN'T COME.
"SHE"?
NEVER MIND.
AH, THE BEAUTIFUL COMRADE LANE! YOU MUST MEET MR. WILLIAM ORT!
IT'S AN HONOR, SIR! YOU'VE DONE A GREAT SERVICE TO THIS COUNTRY WITH YOUR AUTOS.
I KNOW IT.
YES, UH... WHAT DO YOU DRINK, MR. ORT?
GOAT'S MILK.
AND?
AND WHAT?
15

I'M . I'M JUST AFRAID MR. CRANSTON MAY NOT HAVE--
I WON'T STAY LONG. DON'T BELIEVE IN PARTIES. DON'T BELIEVE IN BEING SERVED. A MAN SERVES HIMSELF.
I KEEP MY OWN GOATS.
WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?
A MAN SHOULDN'T HAVE SECRETS. DON'T BELIEVE IN 'EM. LET MAN KNOW WHAT THE LORD KNOWS.
THESE FELLOWS WANT ME TO BUILD AN AUTOMOBILE FACTORY IN THEIR COUNTRY. USE YANKEE KNOW-HOW, THAT'S IT, GET THEM OUT OF THIS SPOT THAT ALL THAT GOVERNMENT OF THEIRS GET THEM IN.
LOT OF PEOPLE SAY I SHOULDN'T BE HELPING THE COMMUNISTS. THAT'S BOSH. COMMUNISM'S BOSH. CAPITALISM'S BOSH.
INDUSTRY, THAT'S IT. THE WORK OF A MAN'S HANDS. THAT'S WHAT THIS DEPRESSION'S FOR, TO GIVE THE WORLD OVER TO INDUSTRY, AS THE LORD MEANT IT.
THEN ALL THESE COUNTRIES CAN BE GOT RID OF. COUNTRIES ARE BOSH.
BUT OF COURSE WE NEED GOVERNMENT FOR--
NOTHING GOVERNMENT CAN DO THAT AN INDUSTRIALIST CAN'T DO BETTER. I HAVE BETTER SPIES THAN YOU.
WHY, I KNOW EVERYTHING YOU TWO FELLOWS HAVE EVER DONE.
THAT'S WHY THIS FELLA STALIN IS SMART TO CALL ON ME. NO MORE OF THIS WORKER'S PARADISE BOSH. THE EARTH'LL BE A PARADISE FOR EVERYBODY WHEN INDUSTRY TAKES OVER.
JUST A PITY I CAN'T HELP HIM ANYMORE.
WHAT?!

BUT MR. ORT--YOU KNOW HOW SOVIET ECONOMY MUST NEED YOUR--YOUR DEVELOPMENT.
I KNOW IT.
THEN WHAT HAS HAPPENED? HAVE YOU... HAVE YOU LEARNED SOMETHING...?
COMRADE VASILEVICH, CAN YOU TELL--
VASILEVICH!
THIS WOMAN AGAIN--WHENEVER YOU SEE HER YOU BECOME A FOOL--FORGET YOUR DUTY--
HOW LONG MUST I COVER UP FOR YOU? HOW LONG--
YOU WON'T HAVE TO, MUCH LONGER.
ENOUGH OF YOUR HINTS--YOUR SANCTIMONY--
YOU KNOW WHAT I CAN--
UHHH
BAFF
YOU CAN DO NOTHING.
MY PATIENCE IS ENDED, VASILEVICH. TOMORROW I FILE THAT REPORT I'VE BEEN THREATENING SO LONG.

HELLO...
...''LAMONT CRANSTON.''
YOU USED A *DIFFERENT* NAME THEN.
I WAS AN AGENT OF A GOVERNMENT AT WAR.
AND NOW?
ONLY A MAN OF LEISURE.
THE MAN I KNEW COULD NEVER BE LIKE THAT.
PERHAPS THE WORLD HAS NO OTHER USE FOR ME.
AND IF THERE IS ANOTHER WAR?
OH, BUT THERE CAN'T BE. THAT WAS THE WAR TO *END* WAR, REMEMBER? THEY EVEN *OUTLAWED* IT IN PARIS A FEW YEARS AGO.
YES, YES. HOW FOOLISH OF ME.
LEISURE BECOMES YOU--YOU LOOK NO OLDER THAN YOU DID THEN.
I'M AFRAID I COME TO YOU BADLY SCARRED.
SCARS? I DON'T SEE THEM.
ARE YOU GOING TO FLATTER ME NOW? SAY THE THINGS YOU NEVER DARED SAY THEN?
DON'T DENY IT! OH, I KNOW, YOU WERE ONLY A ''FRIEND OF THE COURT.'' BUT *I* SAW HOW YOU LOOKED AT ME WHEN OTHER MEN WERE NEAR ME.
AND HOW YOU LOOKED AT ME WHEN THEY WERE *NOT*.
ANASTASIA, YOU WERE ONLY FIFTEEN YEARS--
AND A GROWN MAN CANNOT FEEL SUCH THINGS FOR A GIRL OF FIFTEEN? YOU COULD SOONER CONVINCE ME THAT WAR *IS* A THING OF THE PAST.

A LAMONT I'VE NEVER KNOWN.
WELL, IT'S NOT FOR ME TO CARE.
NOT FEELING VERY WELL. THE MEDICINE, NO DOUBT. I SHOULD STOP BY THE BATHROOM...
..WHAT DANGER?
NOT HERE. NOT WITH ME. BUT YOU AREN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO SURVIVED, RASPUTIN--
OH DEAR!
YOU ALWAYS HATED HIM WITH SUCH PASSION! TO SEE HIM NEAR ME WOULD MAKE YOU SEETHE--I ALWAYS SUSPECTED YOU OF ARRANGING HIS ASSASSINATION.
WHOEVER ARRANGED IT--FAILED.
RASPUTIN IS ALIVE. IN NEW YORK. MURDERING MEN.
DON'T BE ABSURD. HE WAS POISONED, SHOT, THROWN INTO THE RIVER AND THEN BURIED. BUT YOU KNOW THAT.
I REMEMBER WHEN FATHER GAVE YOU THAT RING, THE FIRE-OPAL. HOW BADLY RASPUTIN LUSTED FOR IT. NOW, WHY WERE YOU GIVEN IT AGAIN?
YOUR MOTHER WAS ACCUSED OF CONSPIRING WITH THE GERMANS. THE RUMOR THREATENED TO BRING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT. I CLEARED HER NAME.
HOW GOOD OF YOU.
BUT THE GOVERNMENT WAS BROUGHT DOWN, WASN'T IT? WHERE WERE YOU THEN?
I HAD BEEN REASSIGNED.
WELL, HOW FUNNY! SO HAD I!
TO SIBERIA-- WITH MY FAMILY.
19



HOW, ANASTASIA? HOW DID YOU SURVIVE?
ONE BOLSHEVIK SOLDIER...
HIS NAME?

HOW WOULD I KNOW THAT? I ONLY KNOW HE TOOK ME TO A LOCAL FAMILY, ARRANGED FOR THEM TO TAKE ME OUT OF RUSSIA--
A GYPSY FAMILY.
HOW--?
DON'T INVOLVE YOURSELF IN THIS!
LET THIS BE JUST A LAST, SWEET MEETING-- A CONVERSATION WITH A GHOST! I WANTED TO SEE YOU ONE TIME--
WHY ARE THE GYPSIES HUNTING YOU?
THE END IS COMING SOON. THINGS WILL HAPPEN--
ALEXANDER VASILEVICH--HE WAS THE SOLDIER WHO SAVED YOU, WASN'T HE? AND ZHERKOV WAS ALSO ON THE FIRING SQUAD.
IS RASPUTIN SERVING ZHERKOV? IS ZHERKOV USING YOU TO--
LAMONT!
→GLUK←

THAT RUSSIAN--
ZHERKOV--
HIS HEAD--
IS IT OVER?
ASK YOURSELF.
...THIRD ONE
THE POLICE...
ANASTASIA--
LAMONT-- WAIT.
THAT WOMAN-- HER VOICE-- THAT'S HER--
--ZARA-- RASPUTIN'S PARTNER.
EDUARDO BARRETO

CCCP
CONSULATE OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS
GOOD EVENING, COMRADE VASILEVICH.
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WE NEED TO TALK.
BURYING THE DEAD

Dennis Cowan

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Sometimes, in the business of making up stories, you run into these wonderful confluences of seemingly separate streams. Suddenly what had been a few little trickles becomes one big flow that carries the writer effortlessly downstream.

Let's track the headwaters of one of those trickles, into the Russia of 1904. A peasant's son, an itinerant mystic, a self-proclaimed monk named Gregor Yefimovich came stomping out of Siberia into the parlors of St. Petersburg. Decaying empires seem fatally attracted to oddball mysticism, and this man—known as "Rasputin"—proved irresistible, with his upside-down Christian doctrine of salvation through sin, his tales of mystical journeys into central Asia, his claim that the Supreme Being was incarnated within him, his raging appetites and physical energy.

He was soon introduced to Czar Nicholas and his family, and displayed a hypnotic charisma in his influence over the females of the court. Foremost among those women was Czarina Alexandra, through whom he gained enormous power in the Russian government. Youngest was the Archduchess Anastasia, barely into her teens as Russia lumbered toward World War I.

The war was a desperate time for the old empire, and Rasputin only made things worse: squandering money; putting his idiot friends in positions of power; urging Alexandra to crack down on the increasingly restive populace, which only pushed them toward open revolt.

Moderates in the government tried to kill him in 1914. It didn't work; he was too tough. Two years later, with the country at the brink of collapse, they tried it again. Using his own appetites against him, they invited him to dinner and dumped cyanide in his food. It only made him sick. So they shot him down, and laid him on a table. The next thing they knew he was on his feet, roaring with rage, attacking his assassins. Some stories say that they shot him again. Some say they knifed him. In any case, they thought they'd killed him ... again. They tied him up and threw him in the river. One witness swore that he saw Rasputin struggling furiously with his ropes as he sank.

His body was found, and Alexandra had it buried in the family garden. She prayed on his grave every night for a year, reportedly convinced that he was not dead. Not forever. She knew he would come back someday, somehow—which, in view of everything, was hard to argue with.

Rasputin's assassination didn't save Imperial Russia. The rifts were too wide. The people rose in 1917 and cast off the decrepit Czarist government. Later that same year, in a second wave of revolution, the Bolsheviks took control. The Czar's family was moved to its vacation home at the edge of Siberia. In July, 1918, a Bolshevik firing squad killed them all.

But rumors began to circulate that Anastasia had somehow survived, perhaps saved by kind-hearted Communist soldiers. A woman in Europe claimed to *be* Anastasia, although the evidence was lacking. A play on the subject, *Anastasia,* packed them in on Broadway in 1926. Maybe there were bits of truth in it, maybe it was just romantic wishful thinking. No one knows.

Now, another trickle. In 1930, when the Shadow's pulp adventures began, the Russian Revolution was only thirteen years past, and there were still plenty of active Czarists dreaming of undoing it. Walter Gibson played off a Russian connection while filling in his hero's shady past. The Shadow, under another name, had been an agent for either the U.S. or Britain in the Czar's court during the World War. The Czar had given him a girasol ring as a reward for some special favor. In 1932's *The Romanoff Jewels,* he tangled with expatriate Czarists and the Soviet government over a cache of the late Czar's wealth.

In other stories, Gibson hinted that the Shadow's mysterious abilities had been learned among the monks of Tibet. Perhaps the very place (thinks this brain-fevered comic book writer) where Rasputin developed his mad mysticism and his hypnotic charisma.

Enter our third trickle—namely, me. When I was asked to write this series I knew immediately that I wanted to play with the US-USSR detente of 1935, and with old Czarist ghosts. Brian suggested Anastasia. I knew she had to be accompanied by Rasputin. We were both, meanwhile, taking crash courses in Shadow lore. And suddenly, just as it was time to plot this story, it all fell into place. The Shadow in Russia. Rasputin. The girasol. Tibet. Hypnotism. Anastasia. A Soviet officer with a secret.

All the streams flowed together. And the story wrote itself.

—Gerard Jones

NEXT ISSUE: Everything comes to a head and all the threads of the mystery wrap up with the Shadow and the Mad Monk battling high atop the Brooklyn Bridge. Join us for more mystery and action from Gerard Jones and Ed Barreto.

—Brian Augustyn

ED BARRETO'S CONCEPT SKETCH FOR #4